**Streamlining of passport issue procedure**

2446. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of passports issued in the country in the year 2003-04;

(b) the number of passports issued in the year 2003-04 in different cities, giving the respective number of passports issued and the names of the cities where the offices were based;

(c) whether Government are aware that ordinary people are being harassed and heckled at most regional passport offices; and

(d) in what manner Government propose to streamline the issuance of passports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) and (b) The number of passports issued were 29,55,529 in 2003 and 15,10,832 in 2004 (January-June) by the 30 Passport Offices in India. The Statement giving passport office-wise information on issuance of passports is enclosed. (See below).

(c) There are occasional reports of some harassment of passport applicants. Necessary instructions are sent to Passport Offices to look into such cases and take necessary measures to address the public grievances immediately. All Passport Offices have public grievance redressal mechanism at the level of Passport Officers. The Central Passport Organisation headquarters has a separate Public Grievance Cell directly under the Chief Passport Officer which is monitored regularly.

(d) The simplification and streamlining of passport issuance system is a continuous process. A Committee was constituted by the Government in March 2001 to review the Passport Issue System. The Committee submitted its report in September 2001 and made several recommendations for simplification of procedures, decentralization of the submission of passport applications to the district level through the establishment of District Passport Cells, and modernization of Passport Offices. Most of the recommendations made by the Committee have been implemented.

***Statement***

*The number of passports issued in Passport Offices in 2003 and 2004*

| Sl. No. | Name of RPO/PO | Number of Passports issued in 2003 | Number of Passports issued during Jan.-June 2004 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1. | Ahmedabad | 256289 | 112248 |
| 2. | Bangalore | 152986 | 79624 |
| 3. | Bareilly | 31882 | 20009 |
| 4. | Bhopal | 38269 | 20729 |
| 5. | Bhubaneswar | 17071 | 9457 |
| 6. | Chandigarh | 170104 | 88538 |
| 7. | Chennai | 202657 | 109045 |
| 8. | Cochin | 154409 | 81450 |
| 9. | Delhi | 152013 | 89073 |
| 10. | Ghaziabad | 33625 | 21673 |
| 11. | Guwahati | 16479 | 8315 |
| 12. | Hyderabad | 257850 | 146864 |
| 13. | Jaipur | 96400 | 54865 |
| 14. | Jalandhar | 161884 | 79190 |
| 15. | Jammu | 8672 | 5445 |
| 16. | Kolkata | 96851 | 57790 |
| 17. | Kozhikode | 189555 | 100977 |
| 18. | Lucknow | 120775 | 62828 |
| 19. | Mumbai | 187222 | 99686 |
| 20. | Nagpur | 20038 | 11599 |
| 21. | Panaji | 26918 | 12514 |
| 22. | Patna | 31119 | 22477 |
| 23. | Pune | 50469 | 29341 |

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 24. | Ranchi | 10210 | 7135 |
| 25. | Srinagar | 10080 | 5164 |
| 26. | Surat | 7165 | 21862 |
| 27. | Thane | 74382 | 39008 |
| 28. | Trichy | 217300 | 132780 |
| 29. | Trivandrum | 112509 | 61173 |
| 30. | Vishakhapatnam | 50346 | 32221 |
| | TOTAL | 2955529 | 1510832 |

**Official policy to deal with hostage situation**

2447. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have in place any set official policy to deal with the hostage situation by domestic and foreign terrorists;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) whether there is any proposal to formulate basic guidelines to deal the cases of hostages which of late, have started increasing and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) to (d) It is the policy of the Government of India not to compromise with terrorist groups or elements. However, while adhering to this principle, the objective of the Government is to ensure the safety and well-being of all its citizens, whether in India or abroad. In case of hostage-taking, Governments makes all efforts possible to secure the early and safe release of its nationals. In order to deal with hostage situations, the Government has an institutionalised mechanism in place. There is a crisis management group which is set up immediately and is tasked with the constant monitoring and handling of the situation in close consultation with concerned agencies, our diplomatic missions abroad and with foreign governments. The Cabinet Secretary also holds a parallel set of inter-ministerial meetings, as required, to take appropriate decisions. The Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs may